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House of Representatives

NOT THE BEST WAY TO PROVIDE FOR OUR ENERGY NEEDS

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Chairman, I rise today to oppose this Energy bill. Rather than emphasizing conservation and renewable energy sources, this bill focuses on destroying our natural resources and using fossil fuels to meet our energy needs.

Supporters of this bill claim it is a consumer friendly bill that increases Americans' access to cheaper energy. Admittedly, there are a few positive aspects of the bill. For example, there are incentives to use cellulosic biomass ethanol. This not only makes gasoline cleaner, but it also creates jobs and other uses for crops such as sugar cane. There are also a few incentives to use renewable fuels such as wind and solar energy.

Unfortunately, the rest of the provisions in this bill show its true colors. It provides monetary incentives for big oil and gas companies that are nearly twice as much as those that are available for conservation and the use of alternative fuels. These measures do not reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Further, by giving big companies incentives to burn fossil fuels it puts our air quality at risk--our tax dollars

are funding the polluting of our air. It doesn't stop with our air. It also puts our water at risk by weakening protections of rivers, coastal areas, and drinking water. As if that wasn't enough, this bill opens the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to gas and oil drilling, destroying one of our last great natural resources.

The final blow is that it weakens consumer protections against companies like Enron from manipulating the energy market. As a Congressman from California, where we suffered through blackouts and sky-high electricity bills because of electricity market abuse, this is unacceptable. This bill rips the blanket of protection off consumers, leaving them with no tools to fend off corporate abuses.

This is not the best way to reduce our dependence on foreign oil; this is not the best use of technology and this is not the best way to protect our health and environment. That is why I cannot support this bill and I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill.